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## South Africa - Republic of

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### US-SADC Exchange on Good Regulatory Practices in Southern Africa

**Report Categories:**

Trade Policy Monitoring

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**Report Highlights:**

USAID's Southern Africa Trade Hub brought together government regulators and standards organizations from across Southern Africa and the United States for a discussion with the Southern African Development Community (SADC), namely the SADC Cooperation in Standardization (SADCSTAN) and the SADC Technical Regulation Liaison Committee (SADCTRLC), in Johannesburg from June 1-2, 2015. Titled the "U.S.-SADC Exchange on Good Regulatory Practices with SADCSTAN and SADCTRLC," this workshop provided an opportunity for regulators and standards bodies to discuss the importance of establishing good regulatory practices, harmonizing standards across the region, and ensuring that regulations and standards are scientifically based in all economic sectors; participants shared lessons and experiences learned in their respective countries. The event is important to trade policy because generating a regional consensus on requirements for product quality can accelerate trade and increase the volume of trade.

## **Attendees**

USAID's Southern Africa Trade Hub works on issues that include but are not limited to trade facilitation. For this reason, the Trade Hub hosted the exchange and invited a diverse group of individuals, including personnel from the following groups:

- American National Standards Institute
- ASTM International
- Caterpillar Inc.
- Distilled Spirits Council of the United States
- U.S. Trade Representative
- U.S. Office of Management and Budget's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
- SADC
- National standards bureaus and other agencies from Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe

## **Conference Themes**

The overarching themes of the conference were the importance of establishing good regulatory practices, harmonizing standards across the region, and ensuring that regulations and standards are scientifically based.

A representative from ASTM International, a standards developing organization, spoke to the group about ASTM's value of scientific and evidence-based rulemaking, citing the example of their work using data on injuries caused by faulty toddler beds in order to improve the standard for that product. Similarly, within the topic of encouraging good regulatory practices, an official from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OMB-OIRA) spoke about the importance of Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) in which agencies look at consequences, benefits, and costs to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of regulation. That official also described American efforts to achieve transparency through the websites [Regulations.gov](http://Regulations.gov) and [FederalRegister.gov](http://FederalRegister.gov), which show regulations available for public comment and finalized regulations respectively.

As for local intergovernmental perspectives, officials from SADCSTAN and SADCTRLC spoke about the purpose of those organizations in terms of shaping the regulatory framework for standards and the elimination of unnecessary technical barriers to trade (TBTs).

## **Implications for Trade**

One implication of the discussions is that FAS has the opportunity to assist in efforts for trade facilitation through increased partnership with USAID and SADC. Cooperation with SADC presents the ability for FAS to reach a wide audience by providing technical assistance at the regional level, as SADC is a regional economic community with 15 member states. FAS is supportive of initiatives that promote the development of science-based regulation and standards systems within the realm of agricultural trade.

Hyperlinks to recent FAS/Pretoria GAIN reports related to the issues in this report are below.

- [Regulation amendment on container labels of alcoholic beverages \(1/30/2015\)](#)
- [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Narrative \(12/31/2014\)](#)
- [South Africa voluntarily suspends citrus exports to the EU \(11/10/2014\)](#)
- [Proposed protection of Geographical Indications in South Africa \(8/26/14\)](#)
- [SAADPP Regional Policy and Agribusiness Conference 2014 \(8/14/2014\)](#)
- [Agricultural Biotechnology Annual - Biotechnology in South Africa \(7/14/2014\)](#)
- [Southern African Countries Discuss Biotech Harmonization Policies \(4/7/2014\)](#)